

Mapping Honduras

Carla McNelly

Critical and Socio-cultural Studies in Education, University of Oregon

Introduction

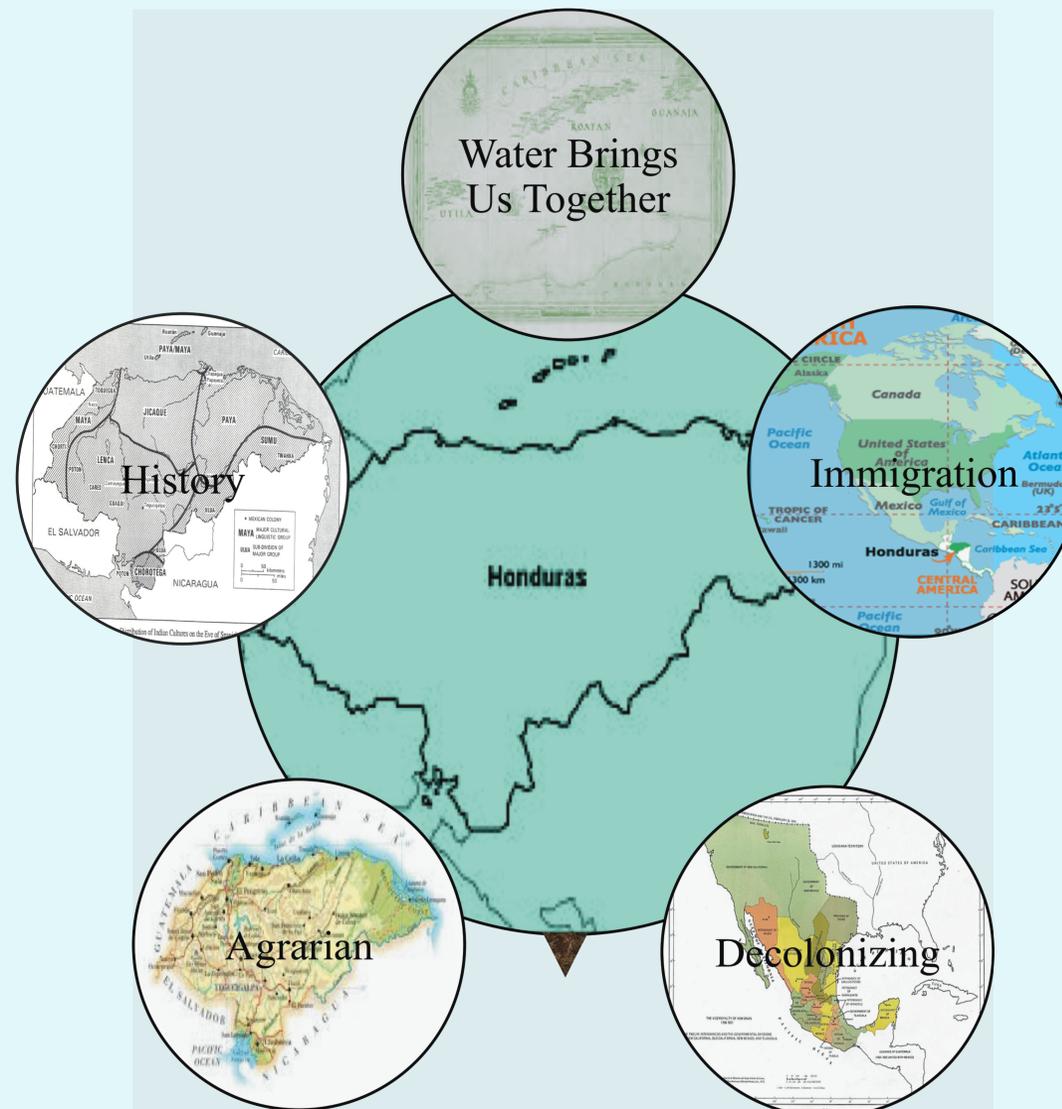
This poster will outline a ten week university course, Mapping Honduras, where undergraduate and graduate students will be exposed to a decolonized approach to learn about the history and people of Honduras. The course begins with a foundation challenging students to think critically about the information they read with the help of work from Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) and Eduardo Galeano's *Open Veins of Latin America* (1974). Students will be presented with and discuss maps of the area known today as Honduras before contact, during Spanish and British colonization, and today. The main focus of the poster will be the curriculum for Week 5 – *Water Brings Us Together: A Closer Look at Colonization*, which examines the history and people of Roatan, one of the Bay Islands off the coast of Honduras. The main purpose of this lesson is for students to learn that there are places worldwide that are being colonized today and by whom. Students will critically examine the national curriculum of Honduras and matriculation rates to determine patterns and draw conclusions of how and when history is presented to Honduran students. Students will become familiar with two resorts on Roatan, to find similarities and differences between local family and US owned corporate businesses located there. The course continues by concentrating on agrarian land reform and immigration; two very important topics that Hondurans face today. With the knowledge they gain from the previous weeks, students are able to examine the important issues today with a more informed critical lens.

Lesson Objectives

The audience is both undergraduate and graduate university students. Students will be able to identify where on a map of Central America Honduras is located, and more specifically, the Bay Islands and the Island of Roatan. Students will be able to identify different times in history when Honduras and the Bay Islands were colonized by various countries from Europe and North America. Students will be able to identify specific indigenous groups that have lived in Honduras and on Roatan and where indigenous people live today. Students will be able to identify that Honduras and the island of Roatan is still being colonized today.

Week 5 Overview

Week 5 lesson plan builds on the following concepts presented in weeks 1-4. Week 1 is designed as a time to begin building an environment where students feel safe and comfortable sharing and learning together. Week 2 introduces the colonization of Latin America. Week 3 addresses the concept of decolonization. Week 4 introduces an overview of the people living in the area we now know as Honduras presently and before contact with Christopher Columbus. Lessons presented in each of these four weeks will be extended by the lesson plan during Week 5, focusing closer on one example of colonization.



Reading List

- Alvarado, E., Benjamin, M., & Institute for Food and Development Policy (Oakland, Calif.). (1989). *Don't be afraid, gringo: Honduran woman speaks from the heart: the story of Elvia Alvarado*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Galeano, E. H. (1974). *Open veins of Latin America: Five centuries of the pillage of a continent*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Nazario, S. (2006). *Enrique's journey*. New York: Random House.
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books.

Class Content

Week 5 is the lesson called: *Water Brings Us Together: A Closer Look at Colonization*. Students will come to class having skimmed the Currículo Básico de Honduras (Secretaría de Educación, 2010) written in Spanish, to find what grade level the curriculum covers the history and people of Roatan. Students will also come to class having looked at the Honduran 2010 Matriculation report (Secretaría de Educación, 2010) provided by the government of Honduras at the end of each academic year (which begins in February and ends in November each year). In preparation for class, students will be asked to review the websites for two resorts on Roatan: Foster's West Bay and Infinity Bay. They will also be asked to research the history and people of Roatan in any way they choose. In class, students will be asked to first share in small groups and then with the entire class what they have learned by preparing for class. Students will not be told that they may have a tough time finding resources that tell the story of Roatan's people and colonization from a perspective other than myth or from tourist destinations. This is one of the main objectives of this lesson; realizing there is a lack of literature on the colonization and the history of Roatan. Students will not be told what to look for on the matriculation report from 2010 because one of the main objectives of this course will be to look at various types of information with a critical lens. Students will not be told that the Currículo Básico de Honduras is written in Spanish. Some students may not know how to read Spanish. This is the reason that students are asked to "skim" the document. This will be part of the objective that informational resources may not be in their first language; like some of the students that live on Roatan. Students will be told that we are going to focus on Roatan as a closer look at colonization of Honduras. Students will be encouraged to be curious and to go past the readings and to research the topics each week in their own ways and share their information with the class, so that we can learn from each other.

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the course will be to offer an encouraging safe environment for students to share and learn from the materials presented and each other from the information they have researched, read, and critically reflected upon. The remaining weeks of the course will cover issues of agrarian land reform during Weeks 6 and 7, and culminate with issues surrounding immigration as it affects Hondurans during Weeks 8 and 9. Week 10 will be reserved to answer any questions students have regarding the themes, materials, and questions presented during the term. For the final students will be asked to take a question from all of their reflection papers and find some answers in the form of a 10 page research paper with citations in APA style (grad students 20 pages). They will be asked to demonstrate that they are aware of the position that their sources are coming from, what sources they believe, and why.

In loving memory of Yeffri Millan Hernandez Gomez
January 29, 1988 to March 8, 2011